



FloorPrep

Legislative Digest

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Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

— *Update* —

Anticipated Floor Action:

**H.R. 1905—FY 2000 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act
(Conference Report)**

**H.R. 2116—Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act
S. 507—Water Resources Development Act (Conference Report)**

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H.R. 1905—FY 2000 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act (Conference Report)

Floor Situation: The House will consider the conference report to H.R. 1905 after it completes consideration of the rule to H.R. 2684. Conference reports are privileged and may be considered any time three days after they are filed. Earlier today, Ms. Pryce obtained unanimous consent to waive all points of order against consideration of the conference report and debate it for 20 minutes, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Appropriations Committee.

Summary: The conference report to H.R. 1905 appropriates \$2.5 billion in new budget authority for FY 2000, about \$124.1 million less than last year, for the operations of the legislative branch. Total House funding is \$760.9 million, \$21 million more than the House-passed bill and \$20.4 million more than FY 1999. Total Senate funding is \$489.4 million, \$14.5 million more than last year.

Of the total appropriation, \$1.7 billion is for congressional operations (including joint items such as the Capitol Police and the Architect of the Capitol, and agencies such as the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service) and \$743.1 million for other agencies that serve Congress, the executive branch, and the general public (such as the Library of Congress and the General Accounting Office). Overall, the conference report appropriates a net increase of \$594.1 million from the House-passed bill. Most of this net increase is for the operations of the Senate (\$489.4 million). The House-passed bill omitted this funding, since it is customary for each body of Congress to determine its own operational

funding level without objection from the other body. Finally, the conference agreement provides \$406.3 million for members' representational allowances, \$21 million more than the House-passed bill and the FY 1999 level.

The House passed H.R. 1905 by a vote of 214-197 on June 10, 1999. The Senate approved the bill by a vote of 94-4 on June 16, 1999.

Views: The Republican leadership supports passage of the bill. An official Clinton Administration viewpoint was unavailable at press time.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #23, Pt. V, August 5, 1999; and #15, May 21, 1999.



H.R. 2116—Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act

Floor Situation: The House is expected to consider H.R. 2116 after it completes consideration of the conference report to H.R. 1905. Mr. Stump is expected to ask for unanimous consent to consider the measure.

Summary: H.R. 2116 makes several comprehensive reforms to improve access, timeliness, and quality of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. Reforms include (1) requiring the VA to increase home and community-based options for veterans needing long-term care; (2) lifting the six-month limit on VA adult day health care; (3) providing Purple Heart recipients the same priority as Prisoners of War (POWs) and expanding health care eligibility for other veterans; (4) establishing means to enhance revenues for VA (e.g., the bill establishes a copayment for certain services and requires the federal government to give the VA a proportional amount of any funds recovered for the treatment of tobacco-related illnesses—the bill does not, however, take a position regarding whether the government should file a lawsuit to recover any tobacco funding); and (5) extending VA's authority to provide grants to assist homeless veterans. In addition, the bill:

- * expands extended care services for veterans;
- * grants higher priority access to VA medical services for military retirees;
- * authorizes a pilot program for health care for dependents of veterans;
- * expands VA's authority to lease unneeded property;
- * provides compensation and health care services to veterans who suffer disability or death due to participation in the work therapy program; and
- * extends VA's authority to provide counseling to sexual trauma victims and Vietnam-era veterans.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that enactment will result in discretionary outlays of approximately \$141 million in FY 2000 and \$1.4 billion in 2004. In addition, CBO estimates that the provision to allow the VA to spend proceeds from tobacco litigation will increase direct spending by approximately \$2 million over the FY 2000-2004 period and by \$647 million over 10 years. The bill affects direct spending, so pay-as-you-go procedures apply. The bill was introduced by Mr. Stearns *et al.* and the Veterans Affairs Committee reported the bill by voice vote on July 15, 1999.

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S. 507—Water Resources Development Act (Conference Report)

Floor Situation: The House will consider the conference report to S. 507 after it completes consideration of the rule to appoint conferees on S. 1467. Mr. Shuster or a designee is expected to ask unanimous consent later this evening to consider the measure.

Summary: The conference report to S. 507 authorizes \$6.3 billion for projects and programs of the Army Corps of Engineers civil works program (approximately \$4.3 billion for the federal share of costs and \$2 billion for the non-federal sponsors). The bill responds to pressing water infrastructure priorities, policy initiatives to update existing water resources programs, and programs to restore, protect, and enhance the aquatic environment. Specifically, the bill authorizes 114 new water resources projects (including 45 major Corps projects at a cost of \$2.3 billion), modifies 75 existing authorized projects (to account for changes in project conditions), and authorizes the Corps to conduct 60 studies to address a variety of water resources problems and opportunities.

The conference report authorizes modifications to Folsom Dam (e.g., enlarging existing water outlets and constructing additional outlets) as well as a feasibility study on raising the height of the facility. In addition, the bill contains general provisions relating to Corps operations, such as measures to (1) modify cost-sharing requirements; (2) create or expand Corps authorities to protect the environment; and (3) update and streamline Corps administrative procedures.

The Senate passed S. 507 (*S.Rept. 106-34*) by unanimous consent on April 19, 1999. The House passed its version (H.R. 1480; *H.Rept. 106-106, Pt. I*) by a vote of 418-5 on April 29.

Views: The Republican leadership supports passage of the conference report. An official Clinton Administration viewpoint was unavailable at press time.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #23, Pt. VI, August 5, 1999; or #11, April 23, 1999.

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